

Core Strategy

04 Historic Built Environment Key Issue Paper

Options for Consideration Consultation
4th October – 24th December 2010



Prepared by Christchurch Borough Council and
East Dorset District Council as part of the Local Development Framework

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper has been prepared as part of the Local Development Framework to inform the development of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy. This paper is one of a number of thematic background papers which address distinct spatial issues affecting Christchurch and East Dorset. These issues have been identified from the Regional Spatial Strategy, local policy, local development framework evidence base and the Community Plans of Christchurch and East Dorset. This document sets out the process of how the spatial strategy for the historic built environment has been refined toward the development of a preferred strategy following Issues and Options work undertaken for the Core Strategy in spring 2008. This paper sets out the critical issues, problems and challenges to be considered in planning for the historic built environment. The development of a preferred spatial strategy to address these issues has been informed by the following:

- National, regional and local policy
- Objectives of other relevant plans and programmes (National to local)
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Core Strategy Issues and Options Stakeholder Engagement
- Evidence studies undertaken by the Council and key stakeholders.

1.2 The formulation of a preferred spatial strategy provides the context for the preparation of specific policies to inform decisions about how the historic built environment will be protected in the future.

2 Baseline

2.1 Christchurch Borough

2.2 Christchurch Borough has a diverse and for the most part high quality environment. This includes the attractive coastal environment, nature conservation sites of international importance, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, historic buildings and townscape along with areas of open countryside. The town centre area contains many Listed Buildings, a few dating from the medieval period and the majority from the 18th-19th century. There are also ancient monuments and areas of archaeological interest. The quality of the town centre's townscape, which is complemented by the attractive natural features and surroundings, is a vital element of the Borough's importance as a tourist centre.

2.3 There are 12 designated Conservation Areas in the Borough. The Local Planning Authority is currently carrying out a re-appraisal of all the Conservation Areas which will help inform future policies. In addition there are 287 statutory listed buildings. It is notable that six of them are Grade I Listed Buildings. Of these, 5 are in the town centre area: Christchurch Priory and Parish Church, The Castle, Constable's House and Town Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. The other Grade I Listed Building is Highcliffe Castle.

Figure 1 Conservation Areas in Christchurch

2.4 East Dorset

2.5 East Dorset, like Christchurch, is an area of high environmental quality ranging from the small villages set within the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the north to the historic town of Wimborne Minster in the south. It contains a wealth of archaeological remains, nature conservation sites of international importance, including the important Lowland Heaths, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, historic buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and areas of high quality open countryside. The character and quality of the settlements and the surrounding countryside is an important element of the attractiveness of the District and plays a role in attracting visitors to the area and making it a pleasant and desirable place to live and work.

2.6 There are 19 Conservation Areas within the District, each of which has had an Appraisal carried out in recent times which are all adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the East Dorset Local Plan. These Conservation Areas cover rural settlements as well as parts of the larger, urban centres of the District. The District contains 697 statutory Listed Buildings, 19 of which are Grade I, 41 are Grade II*, and the remainder are Grade II. The Grade I Listed Buildings consist of a number of substantial houses such as Kingston Lacey, which is owned and administered by the National Trust, as well as privately owned and occupied properties such as Cranborne Manor House, Crichel House, St Giles House and Dean's Court in Wimborne, and a number of ancient bridges and churches across the District. A number of these properties also have Historic Parks and Gardens surrounding them. Many of the large rural houses are focal points of substantial country estates and have numerous farm and other estate buildings, many of which have identifiable architectural styles of building, associated with them.

2.7 There are 17 Special Character Areas (older, well landscaped residential areas which are important for their character and the contribution they make to the local environment) in East Dorset which were designated in the East Dorset Local Plan and which are important for their character and the contribution they make to the local environment. The issues associated with these areas will be addressed in the Design and Landscape Key Issue Paper.

2.8 Sustainability Appraisal Baseline Information

2.9 The historic built environment of both Christchurch and East Dorset is important to the character of the area, and makes it an attractive area in which to live, work and visit. The protection and enhancement of that cultural heritage is important to the economy of the area in that it makes Christchurch and East Dorset attractive to tourists and potential residents alike. However, the protection of the historic built environment has to be considered against the management of visitors and the costs associated with maintaining and enhancing these features. The Christchurch and East Dorset Scoping Report (2008) assesses broad environmental, social and economic characteristics of the plan area and how these are changing. This assessment takes a long term view of how the area is anticipated to change. The Scoping Report sets out baseline information and identifies sustainability issues, some of which are relevant to this paper and are set out below. This baseline information forms a part of the identification of key issues to be addressed by the Local Development Framework.

2.10 Environmental Baseline and Issues

2.11 The environment of East Dorset and Christchurch is of exceptionally high quality, cherished by the local community and attracting tourists throughout the year. Both Authorities boast a rich archaeological and historic built heritage within an attractive landscape setting.

2.12 Countryside and Landscape

2.13 In East Dorset 45% of the land is designated as the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the New Forest National Park lies on the border of the Districts. These designations attract visitors and tourists, and make the area an attractive place to live and work, but need to be carefully managed to ensure that the countryside and landscape, with its historic and architecturally significant components, is preserved and enhanced while still being utilised in a sustainable manner.

2.14 Historic Environment

2.15 Both Christchurch and East Dorset have important historic environments including Wimborne Town Centre, Christchurch Town Centre and many locally and nationally listed buildings. The appeal of these areas, including archaeological features and historic parks and gardens, is due to the high quality of much of the historic environment and therefore the Core Strategy must seek to protect these features, whilst balancing the needs of the local economy. There are significant pressures exerted on the historic environment. These come from the demand to modernise historic buildings, change their uses, develop within Conservation Areas and from the increased affects of traffic and highway improvements. The Core Strategy will need to ensure that future developments or proposals do not cause significant harm to, and which can positively enhance, listed buildings and their settings, conservation areas, archaeological sites and historic landscapes.

2.16 The Core Strategy will contain proposals for a substantial amount of residential and commercial development within both administrative areas. Care will have to be taken to ensure that these developments respect and enhance the quality of the environment, and maintain local distinctiveness, both within the existing urban areas and within the open countryside.

2.17 Water/flooding

2.18 The town centres of both Christchurch and Wimborne are vulnerable to flooding. The constraints imposed by the need to alleviate flood risk will be required to be incorporated into schemes that affect the historic built environment, and a balance needs to be struck between the two.

2.19 Social Baseline and Issues

2.20 Culture, Leisure and Recreation

2.21 Christchurch and East Dorset both have a high quality range of cultural, leisure and recreational facilities which are used by both residents and visitors to the area. The main conflict lies in the sustainable promotion of these facilities to support the local economy against issues of the protection and enhancement of the features. The Core Strategy will need to address these issues.

2.22 Economic Baseline and Considerations

2.23 Tourism and the Economy

2.24 The rich historic and cultural heritage of Christchurch and East Dorset is an important factor in defining the character of the area for both residents and visitors, with historic buildings and parks attracting significant numbers of visitors per annum. The tourist industry is important to both authorities' economies and the Core Strategy needs to consider how tourism can be used to help the economy without harming the environmental assets of the area.

2.25 Baseline Mapping

2.26 Where appropriate constraint maps should be produced on GIS illustrating spatial constraints across the whole plan area Particular constraints that need to be mapped include:

2.27 Baseline map to include the AONB, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Monuments, major Archaeological Sites.

2.28 **Core Strategic Messages**

2.29 From the baseline information it is evident that Christchurch and East Dorset have an existing high quality historic built environment which is important to the character of the area, and to the local economy, with particular reference to tourism. These features need to be protected and enhanced to maintain that strong sense of place which makes Christchurch and East Dorset an attractive place to live, visit and work.

2.30 Policy Background

2.31 The following policies/plans have implications for the preparation of the Core Strategy:

PPS 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (March 2010)

Analysis

- Policy HE3.4 states that at a local level, plans should consider the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and how these can contribute to the development of the spatial vision in the LDF core strategy.
- The statement emphasises the importance of the historic environment to the cultural development and identity of the nation and calls for the conservation of heritage assets, for the benefit of this and future generations.
- The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable resource and its fragile nature should be recognised and considered as part of the planning process.

Conserving this resource for future generations accords with the principles of sustainable development.

Core Strategic Messages

The spatial vision for Christchurch and East Dorset will take into account the important role the historic built environment plays in creating distinctive and attractive environments and contributing to sustainable economic growth. Policies aimed at protecting and enhancing our historic assets should therefore be introduced into the framework.

Table 2.1

PPS 5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practise Guide’ (March 2010)

The purpose of this guide is to assist local authorities and other interested parties in implementing PPS 5 and to help in the interpretation of policies within the PPS. It reinforces that ‘significance’ is a key term in the PPS policies. Along with the ‘historic environment’ and ‘heritage asset’, it is used as a term to sum up the qualities that make an otherwise ordinary place a heritage asset. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest.

Core Strategic Messages

The Practice Guide recognises the importance of heritage assets nationally and contains detailed guidance to enable local planning authorities to establish strategies for the positive and proactive conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment in their area. The local authority will have to decide whether there is a need to introduce new policies aimed at how best to conserve individual, groups or types of heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other pressures in the plan area.

Table 2.2

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect listed buildings and those in conservation areas, and the framework by which control is maintained.

Analysis

- Rigorous planning controls ensure a high level of protection of listed buildings
- For buildings located in conservation areas, demolition of such a building requires conservation area consent; alterations made to such buildings do not require consent.
- The Act puts a duty on the local authority to ‘from time to time review the past functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas’.

Core Strategic Messages

Buildings which are listed are comprehensively protected by law. The level of protection is weaker for buildings in conservation areas, where only demolition requires local authority consent. The Core Strategy will have to address this issue by considering whether a higher level of protection should be afforded to unlisted buildings of historical merit.

Table 2.3

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development (January 2005)

Analysis

The PPS emphasis that the protection of the historic environment is an integral component of sustainable development. Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;

It also states that a high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources. Those with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection

Core Strategic Messages

The PPS recognises the important role the preservation of the historic environment plays in sustainable development. The Core Strategy will need to contain policies that are aimed at protecting and enhancing our historic environment.

Table 2.4

Planning Policy Statement Consultation : Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate (March 2010)

Analysis

This Consultation document recognises that changing climate is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today, and sets out the Government’s objectives to ensure that future development is sustainable. It recognises that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy and sustainable buildings within nationally recognised designations such as Conservation Areas should be compatible with the purpose of the designation, and that planning permission for such uses should only be refused if their impact would cause material harm that is not outweighed by wider social, economic or environmental benefits.

Core Strategic Messages

If this Consultation document is adopted in its current form, then the Core Strategy will contain policies regarding the delivery of low carbon developments and consideration will have to be given to the compatibility of such schemes within areas containing Heritage Assets.

Table 2.5

Christchurch Corporate Plan 2008 - 2012

Analysis

The plan emphasises the importance of Christchurch's high quality built environment.

Objective PE2: Maintain a high quality environment

PE5 Encourage the use and enjoyment of the amenities provided by Christchurch's unique environment

Core Strategic Messages

The Core Strategy will need to take account of these objectives.

Table 2.6

Christchurch Local Plan 2001

Analysis

The Local Plan contains the following policies aimed at protecting and enhancing the historic built environment

BE2 sets out criteria for assessing proposals for the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

BE3 sets out criteria for assessing proposals for the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings that make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

BE4 Seeks to protect the quality of conservation areas and individual buildings within a conservation area.

BE5 Seeks to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas when considering development proposals which are outside but close to the boundaries of a conservation area.

BE11 Resists further development on land between Mudeford and the harbour edge and between 71 Mudeford and the Avonmouth Hotel which would affect the special character and appearance of the area.

BE14 Resists inappropriate alterations and extensions to listed buildings

BE15 Seeks to protect and enhance the setting of listed buildings when considering new development proposals

BE16 Seeks to protect existing views of important buildings and attractive vistas when considering proposals for new development.

BE18 Identifies possible future uses of Highcliffe Castle

BE19 Sets out criteria to assess proposals for alteration or extension of buildings identified by the Borough Council as being of local interest.

BE20 Seeks to protect scheduled ancient monuments and nationally important archaeological sites from inappropriate development.

The current policies do not protect locally listed buildings against demolition.

Also, even though policy BE4 seeks to protect unlisted buildings in conservation areas against inappropriate changes, at present the local authority has no control over alterations made under the General Permitted Development Order. This has led to an erosion of historical features in conservation areas.

Core Strategic Messages

The Core Strategy should continue to protect the historic built environment across the Borough, which is one of its key assets, by recognising the intrinsic value of the heritage assets across the area, and continuing to seek to ensure that these features are protected from inappropriate development, and that suitable re-uses are sought for buildings and structures to ensure their economic viability.

Table 2.7

Christchurch Borough-wide Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003)

Analysis

This study has been undertaken to help define the character of the Borough as a series of distinct areas /character zones. Each of the areas is described in terms of the common physical characteristics along with an analysis of how the areas may be seen to possess any distinct identity or sense of place. The study includes an assessment of the capacity of the main character areas to assimilate new development and consideration of the wider implications that such changes would bring by recognising the architectural and landscape quality of the local area.

Core Strategic Messages

By recognising the variety and diversity of the Borough's distinct architectural and landscape areas, strategies can be developed to protect and reinforce their character and preserve their local distinctiveness.

Table 2.8

East Dorset Local Plan (2002)***Analysis****Local Plan Policies*

The Local Plan aims to protect the cultural heritage of the area, including ancient monuments, archaeological sites, historic buildings or areas from damaging developments and contains policies and statements which seek to achieve this.

The following local plan policies contain provisions aimed at protecting and enhancing the historic built environment.

Policy BUCON4 – Services will be underground in Conservation Areas

Policy BUCON5 – Historic Parks and Gardens will be protected

Policy WIMCO14 – Development within the area of St Catherine's, Wimborne will respect its character

Policy CHASE1 – New buildings in Cranborne will respect the scale and character of existing vernacular buildings

Policy CHASE4 – New dwellings will respect the local vernacular in Gussage All Saints

Policy CHASE5 – New dwellings will respect the local vernacular in Gussage St Michael

Policy CHASE7 – Development on a site in Sixpenny Handley will reflect local distinctiveness

CHASE13 – Development on a site in Witchampton will be in keeping with the adjacent vernacular buildings

Core Strategic Messages

The Core Strategy should continue to protect the historic built environment across the District, which is one of its key assets by recognising the intrinsic value of the heritage assets across the area, and continuing to seek to ensure that these features are protected from inappropriate development, and that suitable re-uses are sought for buildings and structures to ensure their economic viability.

Table 2.9

East Dorset Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance (August 1999)

Analysis

The Countryside Design Summary analyses the local landscape and traditional buildings within it to arrive at a Code of Practice which encourages a greater regard for, and sensitivity to, the distinctiveness and character of each locality when designing new rural housing. The Countryside Design Summary is used to inform development management decisions in respect of applications for residential development in the rural areas and has been recognised as a material consideration in various planning appeals.

Core Strategic Messages

By recognising the variety and diversity of the District’s rural heritage, strategies can be developed to protect and reinforce it.

Table 2.10

East Dorset Special Character Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance (2001)

Analysis

The Local Plan recognises that there are areas within the District which have a distinctive character and sense of place, but which do not meet criteria for designation as Conservation Areas, which are in need of protection

Core Strategic Messages

The Local Plan policy BUCON6, supported by this Supplementary Planning Guidance, seeks to guide development within Special Character Areas to ensure that it maintains the local distinctiveness of these areas. Paragraphs 45 – 51 of PPS3 Housing (November 2006) give guidance to Local Authorities on the efficient use of land and states that ‘local planning authorities should facilitate good design by identifying the distinctive features that define the character of a particular local area.’ The existing policy BUCON6 has been successfully used to inform development management decisions in respect of planning applications within these areas and the Council’s approach has been widely supported at appeal.

The Core Strategy policies should continue to protect the area's local distinctiveness.

Table 2.11

'Shaping our future' the Dorset Community Strategy 2007-2016

Analysis

The Strategy recognises that Dorset has a high quality, distinctive natural and built environment and a proportion of it is protected through national designations. It comments that the environmental constraints are an important influence on the management of growth, as there is limited land for new housing and employment use, particularly in south-east Dorset. However the quality of the environment also drives Dorset's economy in terms of both the attraction of people to the area and the provision of a 'product' that underpins tourism, agriculture and recreation. It is one of the reasons people enjoy living and working in Dorset The Strategy goes on to state that one of its two aims is: 'a high quality built environment designed to support viable lifestyles with good provision of green spaces and active use and stewardship of heritage assets'.

Core Strategic Messages

The Strategy recognises that heritage plays an important role in East Dorset's history and economy. The local authority should therefore strive to protect and enhance the historic built environment.

Table 2.12

Christchurch Community Plan 2007-2010

Analysis

The Plan recognises that heritage plays an important role in Christchurch's history and economy.

Core Strategic Messages

The Core Strategy should strive to protect and enhance the historic built environment of the Borough.

Table 2.13

East Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy - Building Communities Together 2008

Analysis

The Strategy recognises that East Dorset is a lovely place to live in or visit, and seeks to balance the pressure for development with the need to protect sites of environmental importance with the aim that the area will be an enjoyable place to live in and visit, where culture and leisure are valued and where the environment is enhanced. It recognises that challenges exist where there is pressure for new development in a high quality environment.

Core Strategic Messages

The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the environment. The objectives of the plan should be incorporated into the Core Strategy.

Table 2.14

2.32 Core Strategic Messages

2.33 The main objectives of the heritage strategy to be set out in the Core Strategy should be to protect and enhance the historic built environment and safeguard the area's local distinctiveness. The policies will have to address the issue of alterations being made to unlisted buildings of historic importance in and outside conservation areas, which at present are not comprehensively regulated by national policy and guidance.

2.34 The policy principles set out in this section will be taken forward with the consideration of new and emerging issues identified in Section 3 below.

3 Identification of Issues

3.1 This section will consider the validity of the questions posed in the Issues and Options consultation (BE1 and BE3) and how appropriate they were, based on responses and other issues identified by key stakeholders, members of the public and through the evidence base. In addition, this section will set out any issues that have been identified from new evidence arising since the Issues and Options engagement. This will then form a consolidated list of issues for the development of preferred options in Section 4.

3.2 In addition this Section will examine new evidence based studies (Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans) to help identify issues that will need to be addressed by the Core Strategy.

3.3 Issues and Options Engagement

3.4 The following issues were identified in the Core Strategy Issues and options paper published in March 2008:

3.5 BE1 – How can the Core Strategy ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?

3.6 There was support for this issue in the Issues and Options consultation, with a high number of responses agreeing with the options, No new issues were identified through the consultation. The baseline data discussed above supports the need to consider this issue, which therefore remains valid.

3.7 Please note that Issue BE2 will be considered in the Design and Landscape Key Issue Paper. This is due to the fact that Special Character Areas have been identified as essential components of the Design Strategy for East Dorset and are better placed to be discussed together with other design policies aimed at ensuring high quality, locally distinctive design.

3.8 BE3 Other Issues identified under this theme

3.9 Apart from the Issues identified and consulted in the consultation document, two additional issues were raised by the respondents in the consultation exercise.

1. First of all, a commonly referred to issue was the lack of options regarding the protection of archaeologically important sites.

3.10 Response: When considering proposals affecting archaeological sites of local importance, the relative importance of the archaeological remains will be a factor in deciding how to accommodate this within the development. In Christchurch there are 12 scheduled Ancient Monuments and 148 in East Dorset. These are listed by English Heritage, and indicated in the County List of Scheduled Monuments. They are protected by the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment. It is judged that a separate policy would repeat national guidance and should therefore not be included in the Core Strategy

3.11 2. Secondly, it was proposed that the Core Strategy should include design policies restricting the height of buildings in sensitive areas.

3.12 Response: This approach might be justified providing it is proven that the character of certain areas has been harmed by taller buildings and will be considered in more detail in the Design and Landscape Key Issue Paper.

3.13 Issues and Options Consultation response

3.14 On a general note the preservation of the built heritage was considered to be very important. There was overwhelming support towards introducing more rigid controls to prevent inappropriate development to historic buildings / conservation areas.

3.15 Evidence studies:

3.16 The historical built environment in Christchurch and East Dorset is of good quality and distinctive character, which is recognised in a large number of designated conservation areas and listed buildings. The areas currently contain a total of 979 listed buildings, 31 Conservation Areas, 5 Historic Parks and Gardens (within East Dorset) and in addition 17 Special Character Areas in East Dorset. The area is also rich in archaeological remains.

3.17 1. Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans-Christchurch

3.18 Christchurch Borough Council has produced Conservation Area Appraisals and associated Management Plans for the following areas:

- Christchurch Central (2005)
 - Winkton (2007)
 - Burton (2007)
 - Mundeford Quay (2008)
 - Stanpit and Fishermans Bank (2008)

3.19 A review of the remaining conservation areas will be undertaken in the near future. The appraisals have highlighted the erosion of the historic character and loss of buildings with historic merit in each of the conservation areas, which is mainly attributed to inadequate controls of features such as timber windows, boundary walls and outbuildings. Recommendations are made to introduce Article 4 Directions in those conservation areas where the erosion of historic character is apparent. The Core Strategy therefore will need to consider whether there is a need to introduce Article 4 Directions (Article 4 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995) across the area to limit the extent of potentially damaging developments

3.20 2. Conservation Area Appraisals- East Dorset

3.21 In East Dorset all of the designated Conservation areas have had their appraisals carried out:

- Almer (2005)

- Cranborne (2005)
- Edmondsham (2005)
- Hinton Martell (2005)
- Gussage All Saints (2005)
- Mapperton (2005)
- Hampreston (2006)
- Horton (2006)
- Shapwick (2006)
- Sturminster Marshall (2006)
- Pamphill (2006)
- Pentridge (2006)
- West Parley (2006)
- Wimborne Minster (2006)
- Wimborne, St John's (2006)
- Wimborne St Giles (2006)
- Witchampton (2006)
- Burts Hill/Merrifield, Colehill (2006)
- Brog Street/Sleight Lane, Corfe Mullen (2007)

3.22 The appraisals identify the buildings, structures, streetscapes, trees and open spaces that make each Conservation Area distinct and important, including the Historic Park associated with Cranborne Manor within the Cranborne Conservation Area, and identifies the criteria the Local Planning Authority use when determining planning applications within them. When considering applications for new development, the Planning Authority ensures that it fits in satisfactorily with the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area which has been identified in the individual appraisal of each Area concerned.

3.23 There are buildings, structures and sites, including Historic Parks and Gardens, that are of local importance in that they make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness which lie outside Conservation Areas. Currently there are no controls in East Dorset in respect of inappropriate works to them or to the loss of features of interest. Christchurch's Local Plan does contain a policy which seeks to protect buildings on its Local List. PPS5 recognises the role structures and features of local importance play in defining the character of an area and suggests that Local Authorities consider the identification of a Local List as part of its LDF process.

3.24 Christchurch and East Dorset Councils should review their controls over minor changes to historic areas and buildings after the recent extension of permitted development rights following the amendment to the General Permitted Development Order in October 2008. These changes significantly extended the amount of development that can be carried out in residential curtilages without planning permission which would incrementally alter the character of such areas. PPS 5 also recognises that permitted development rights could undermine the aims of protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

3.25 English Heritage has carried out the first ever national survey of Conservation Areas at Risk, which has been published on its Heritage at Risk Register 2009. It has concluded that a proportion of Conservation Areas nationally are 'at risk' (defined as having deteriorated over the last three years or expected to do so over the next three years), and that the major threats facing them are unsympathetic replacement doors and windows, poorly maintained roads and pavements, street clutter, loss of boundary walls, fences or hedges, unsightly satellite dishes and other unsympathetic forms of development. This national picture is echoed in the findings of the Conservation Area appraisals which have been carried out in Christchurch.

3.26 The Core Strategy therefore will need to consider whether there is a need to introduce Article 4 Directions (Article 4 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995), as amended March 2010 across the area to limit the extent of potentially damaging developments.

3.27 List of critical issues:

3.28 Taking into account the policy guidance, evidence and consultation responses it is concluded that the key issue for the Core Strategy is how do we establish a strategic framework for the historic built environment in Christchurch and East Dorset, which protects and enhances our heritage whilst at the same time, enables growth?

3.29 The main issues that will need to be addressed are: to be found in the Creating High Quality and Distinctive Environments chapter of the Core Strategy.

3.30 Issue 1 How should we ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?

3.31 Issue 2 How can we protect historically and/or architecturally locally important unlisted buildings, sites, parks and gardens, from demolition or inappropriate development?

3.32 Issue 3 How can we further prevent harmful changes to conservation areas and listed buildings?

4 Formation of Options

4.1 The formulation of Options set out within this section considers the outcomes of the Core Strategy Issues and Options engagement process, baseline information, relevant evidence documents and the Sustainability Appraisal process undertaken at Issues and Options. This includes a critical assessment of the options put forward to address issues identified in the Issues and Options paper. Options for the Historic Built Environment are set out within this section under the consolidated issues identified in Section 3.

4.2 Issue identified at Issues and Options

4.3 BE1: How can we ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?

4.4 Option A: Identify buildings and sites which are currently unlisted but which are worthy of protection and introduce more rigid controls to prevent demolition or harmful alteration

4.5 Issues and Options Consultation response

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
83	23	8	114

Table 4.1

4.6 The vast majority of respondents were of the opinion that the historic built environment is a very important part of the local vernacular and every effort should be made to preserve it. Accordingly, there was an overwhelming support for the introduction of more rigid controls for development in conservation areas and the provision of a higher degree of protection to buildings and sites which are currently unlisted, but are worthy of protection.

4.7 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.8 Paragraph HE3.4 of PPS 5, emphasises the importance of the whole historic environment, not just listed buildings or areas which are statutorily designated, and recommends that Plans should include consideration of how best to conserve individual, group or types of heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other threats.

4.9 Paragraph 15 of the Practice Guide which accompanies PPS 5 comments that in addition to the national and statutory designations, local authorities may formally identify heritage assets that are important to the area, for example through local listing as part of the plan making process. A local designation is widely accepted as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.10 PPS 5 makes reference to ‘Heritage Assets’ as being a building, monument, place or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment, and the document sets out the Government’s objective that Local Planning Authorities should establish policies for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment of the area. This should also include consideration of how best to conserve heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other pressures.

4.11 Christchurch

4.12 Christchurch contains many buildings, which despite not being statutory listed contribute to the area’s distinctiveness and unique character and often provide setting of listed buildings in and outside conservation areas. Bearing this in mind, the Borough Council produced a list of architecturally and historically important local buildings and through Local Plan Policy BE19 afforded them protection against unsympathetic alterations or extensions. The analysis of past records indicates that the policy has been performing well by effectively preventing inappropriate alterations being carried out to properties through the development management process. Unfortunately however, policy BE19 does not protect locally listed buildings against demolition. This makes them extremely vulnerable, especially in the light of the increasing development pressure for housing (the recently carried out conservation area appraisals have highlighted the loss of buildings with historic merit). To rectify this, additional planning controls, regulating demolition of locally listed buildings should be introduced into the Local Development Framework policy framework.

4.13 East Dorset

4.14 The East Dorset Local Plan recognises the need to protect unlisted traditional buildings (para 6.146). The Plan, does not however, contain a specific policy to protect such buildings as resources were unavailable to prepare a Local List during the formulation of the plan. This will be made good through the current Local Development Framework process .

4.15 In addition, the East Dorset Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance comprises a characterisation study of the rural parts of the District. Its main objective is to encourage greater regard for and sensitivity to the distinctiveness and character of each locality when designing new rural housing. Contained with the SPG is a ‘Code of Practice’ which includes a requirement to preserve the distinctive character of existing traditional buildings. Paragraph 1 (e) proposes the establishment of a List of Buildings of Local Interest. Many of these buildings, from small cottages to complexes of farm buildings, add significantly to the quality and character of the rural area and their incremental loss or alteration erode that quality over time. There are numerous examples of the loss of farm buildings, such as small, traditional granaries which no longer easily fit into the agricultural needs of a holding, across East Dorset in particular that could have been retained if there was a Local List.

4.16 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.17 The Sustainability Appraisal does not highlight any adverse impacts and objectives but recognises that an appropriate policy would make a significant positive impact on protecting the historic built environment (objective 18), and a potentially significant positive impact on enhancing diversity and local distinctiveness (objective 19).

4.18 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.19 There was an overwhelming support for the provision of a higher degree of protection to buildings and sites which are currently unlisted, but are worthy of protection. The concept in East Dorset is supported by the Code of Practice set out in the Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance and by PPS 5 and there are numerous buildings and structures across the Plan Area which contribute to local distinctiveness which are worthy of protection.

4.20 Preferred Options to address this option are set out under the following strategic issue:

- **Issue 2: How can we protect historically and/or architecturally locally important unlisted buildings, sites, parks and gardens from demolition or inappropriate development?**

4.21 Option B: Introduce more rigid controls to prevent inappropriate development or demolition within Conservation Areas.

4.22 Issues and Options Consultation Response

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
86	21	3	110

Table 4.2

4.23 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.24 Formal appraisals of the Christchurch and East Dorset Conservation Areas have all highlighted loss of important features to unlisted buildings located in Conservation Areas. The lack of control over the loss of features such as timber windows, low boundary walls, has eroded the character of these historic buildings and, in some areas, lead to the recommendations for revising the Conservation Area Boundary to exclude denuded areas.

4.25 The appraisals in the recommendation sections made the case to remove certain classes of permitted development rights by imposing Article 4 Directions defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended March 2010, which would halt the decline and ultimately lead to the improvement of some areas.

4.26 English Heritage's document Heritage at Risk – Conservation Areas (July 2009) recommends that Local Authorities apply Article 4 Directions in conservation areas to give them control over small changes to things like doors, windows, roof and fences, which, unchecked, lead to slow but irreversible decline of the quality and character of these areas. The Report states that Conservation Areas with Appraisals or Article 4 Directions are almost twice as likely to improve in the next three years as those without.

4.27 PPS 5 (March 2010) recommends in Policy HE4: Permitted Development and Article 4 Directions, that LPAs should consider the use of Article 4 directions for a single heritage asset, class of heritage assets or an area to limit the extent of developments permitted by the General Permitted Development Order which could undermine the aims for the historic environment.

4.28 At present there is very little statutory control over significant alterations available within Conservation Areas apart from the control of complete or substantial demolition of buildings and some walls. However, Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 gives a local authority the ability to remove permitted development rights from a range of forms of development within Conservation Areas and within the curtilages of Listed Buildings. As a result planning permission must be sought and granted before certain alterations can be made or works carried out. By imposing an Article 4 Direction the local authorities can try to stop traditional details being lost and encourage the replacement of inappropriate features with those more suitable to the age and style of the property and the surrounding area.

4.29 The Draft Heritage Protection Bill proposed that planning consent would be required for demolition of the whole or, critically, part of a building within a conservation area. This would have put the law back to where it was thought to be, in terms of protection, before the House of Lords judgement in the case of *Shimizu (UK) Ltd v Westminster CC (1995)*. In short, that case insisted that only total demolition required consent. Practical protection for Conservation Areas has been seriously limited for many years by this case. However the Draft Heritage Protection Bill has been dropped from the Government's current legislative programme and Planning Policy Statement 5 on the historic environment has been published (March 2010) which addresses a number of the issues originally contained within the Draft Bill .

4.30 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.31 The Sustainability Appraisal does not highlight any adverse impacts and objectives but recognises that an appropriate policy would make a significant positive impact on protecting the historic built environment (Objective 18); it would also have a potentially significant positive impact on enhancing diversity (Objective 19) and a minor beneficial impact on creating places and buildings that work well, wear well and look well (Objective 20).

4.32 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.33 Formal appraisals of the Christchurch and East Dorset Conservation Areas have all highlighted loss of important features to unlisted buildings located in Conservation Areas. At present there is very little statutory control over significant alterations available within Conservation Areas apart from the control of complete or substantial demolition of buildings and some walls. However, Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 gives a local authority the ability to remove permitted development rights from a range of forms of development within Conservation Areas and within the curtilages of Listed Buildings. By imposing an Article 4 Direction the local authorities can try to stop traditional details being lost and encourage the replacement of inappropriate features with those more suitable to the age and style of the property and the surrounding area.

4.34 Preferred Options to address this option are set out under the following strategic issue:

- **Issue 3: How can we further prevent harmful changes to conservation areas and listed buildings?**

4.35 Option C: Stronger policy to protect historic parks and gardens

4.36 Issues and Options Consultation response

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
86	12	11	109

Table 4.3

4.37 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.38 Christchurch does not have any designated historic parks and gardens. A thorough assessment was carried out in 1996, when English Heritage, concluded that none of the sites in the Borough meet the listing criteria.

4.39 In East Dorset there are 5 Registered sites, two of which are Grade II* and 3 Grade II. The two Grade II* gardens are Cranborne Manor surrounding the Grade I Listed Building, and St Giles' House, again associated with a Grade I Listed Building. The three remaining parks and gardens are at Boveridge House School (north of Cranborne) and two other properties surrounding Grade I Listed buildings at Crichel House and Kingston Lacy. The Dorset Gardens Trust has identified a number of other parks and gardens within the District which it considers are of County Level importance.

4.40 The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England is maintained by English Heritage. PPS 5 includes grade I and grade II* registered parks and gardens within its list of designated heritage assets where substantial harm to or loss of the asset of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional. Detailed guidance to local planning authorities is set out in Policy HE9 of PPS 5 relating to the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets. This policy, at para HE9.1 states that 'There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be.'

4.41 Under the proposals of the draft Heritage Protection Bill, all of the currently registered parks, gardens and battlefields would have been moved onto the new register as registered heritage open spaces. However, as has been noted above, this Draft Bill has been put on hold for the time being. PPS 5 includes historic parks and gardens, whether formally designated or not, in the list of Heritage Assets in an area, and sets out policies which cover development proposals which affect these features. Therefore there has currently been no formal change in the level of protection afforded to Historic Parks and Gardens as was anticipated. There is currently no requirement for consent to carry out works to registered heritage open spaces over and above any requirement to obtain planning permission. If planning permission is needed for any works then the local planning authority will have to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the asset, any feature of special interest it has and its setting.

4.42 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.43 The Sustainability Appraisal does not highlight any adverse impacts and objectives but recognises that an appropriate policy would make a significant positive impact on protecting the historic built environment (Objective 18), and creating places and spaces that work well (Objective 20)); a potentially significant positive impact on enhancing local distinctiveness and landscape (Objectives 19 and 22); and a minor beneficial impact on providing for community facilities (Objective 9). It might also potentially benefit the organisation of cultural activities.

4.44 Conclusions / Implications for Preferred Options

4.45 In East Dorset there are 5 Registered Parks and Gardens, and The Dorset Gardens Trust has identified a number of other parks and gardens within the District which it considers are of County Level importance. There are no sites worthy of designation in Christchurch. There is currently no requirement for additional consent to carry out works within these areas over and above any requirement for planning permission, although the effect of a development proposal on one of these areas is a material planning consideration.

4.46 Preferred Options to address this option are set out under the following strategic issue:

- **Issue 2: How can we protect historically and/or architecturally locally important unlisted buildings, sites, parks and gardens from demolition or inappropriate development?**

4.47 Option D: Extend existing Conservation Areas or designate new ones.

4.48 Issues and Options Consultation Response

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
42	35	20	97

Table 4.4

4.49 The following suggestions for new conservation areas were put forward:

4.50 -Highcliffe

4.51 -Areas bordering the New Forest National Park

4.52 -Coronation Road (Verwood)

4.53 -Chewton Bunny, Highcliffe

4.54 -Merrifield conservation area to be extended into ‘Victorian’ Colehill

4.55 -St Catherine’s Ward, Wimborne

4.56 It was also suggested that Wimborne Minster Conservation Area should be modified to exclude the existing cricket pitch site (now site of a supermarket and area of public open space, which are nearing completion) and the County Council care home site.

4.57 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.58 The conservation area appraisals and management plans form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework. The appraisals suggested numerous boundary revisions to reflect ownership changes, recent development, and local and national policy changes.

4.59 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 puts particular emphasis on specific duties:

4.60 *'It shall be the duty of the local authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas'*.

4.61 This is reinforced by the guidance set out in PPS 5 Planning for the Historic environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (March 2010), para 27

4.62 Of the areas suggested for designation as Conservation Areas in East Dorset - Coronation Road, Verwood, Merrifield, Colehill and St Catherine's Ward, Wimborne, only the St Catherine's area of Wimborne is likely to be worthy of Conservation Area status. It is currently designated as a Special Character Area in the Local Plan due to its history as part of the former 'Railway Town' and remains a homogeneous area of artisan housing dating from the mid 19th century. It also adjoins the St Johns Conservation Area to the east. The remaining areas do not meet the criteria for designation set out in under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in that they are not of 'special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' in that they contain few or no Listed Buildings or features of historic interest.

4.63 In Christchurch, Chewton Bunny and Highcliffe were put forward for consideration.

4.64 Chewton Bunny forms part of the scenic coastal strip, also incorporating Christchurch Harbour and Mudeford Quay. The area consists of a deep valley cut by Walkford Brook, which creates a narrow cliff frontage with low key development inset amongst native oak and pine woodlands. Even though the area is recognised for its high nature conservation and landscape value, it is considered that it does not meet the criteria of s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4.65 Highcliffe is a well-established residential area to the west of the Borough. The area varies considerably in character from high density flats on the sea front, modern housing estates in Saffron Way and adjoining roads, to collections of houses with large gardens in Hinton Wood Avenue. In view of lack of continuity of house styles and areas of development it is judged that the area does not possess sufficient architectural or historical qualities that would warrant designation.

4.66 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.67 The Sustainability Appraisal does not highlight any adverse impacts and objectives but recognises that an appropriate policy would make a significant positive impact on protecting the historic built environment (Objective 18); a potentially significant positive impact on enhancing diversity and local distinctiveness; (Objective 19) and a minor beneficial impact on the creation of places and spaces that work, wear and look well (Objective 20).

4.68 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.69 The views expressed in response to this Option were not so clearly in favour of the issue as others, with Disagree and No Opinion outnumbering Agree responses. Within East Dorset one location has been put forward for consideration which may meet the criteria for designation as a Conservation Area. None of the areas put forward within Christchurch Borough are considered to meet the criteria necessary for Conservation Area status.

4.70 Preferred Options to address this option are set out under the following strategic issue:

- **Issue 1: How should we ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?**

4.71 OPTION E De-designate conservation Areas which are no longer worthy of protection.

4.72 Issues and Options Consultation Response

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
17	8	7	32

Table 4.5

4.73 No Conservation Areas were suggested to be no longer worthy of protection and put forward for de-designation.

4.74 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

4.75 The evidence does not suggest that any of the existing conservation areas should be considered for de-designation and the retention of historically important areas will form an important part of the heritage strategy.

4.76 The Practice Guide which accompanies PPS 5 sets out, in section 43, what the key considerations should be when drawing up the Core Strategy and other development plan documents. This includes the review of conservation areas.

4.77 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

4.78 The Sustainability Appraisal indicates that an appropriate policy would conflict with the objective of protecting and enhancing the historical built environment (Objective 18). Apart from that it does not highlight any adverse impacts. On the other hand an appropriate policy would have a positive impact on the promotion of the most effective use of land (Objective 2).

4.79 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

4.80 The evidence does not suggest that any of the existing conservation areas should be considered for de-designation and the retention of historically important areas will form an important part of the heritage strategy.

4.81 Preferred Options to address this option are set out under the following strategic issue:

- How should we ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?

PREFERRED OPTIONS

4.82 Issue 1 How should we ensure that valuable buildings and sites are appropriately protected?

4.83 No Preferred Option is proposed as PPS 5 sets out in some detail the national approach to the protection of Heritage Assets.

4.84 Issue 2 How can we protect historically and/or architecturally locally important unlisted buildings, sites, parks and gardens from demolition or inappropriate development?

Preferred Option HE 1, Protection of buildings of local historic and architectural interest (this option is set out in the Core Strategy under Creating High Quality and Distinctive Environments)

4.85 Locally listed buildings, along with monuments, sites or landscapes of historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest will form part of the heritage protection strategy. Local lists of heritage assets will identify key buildings and structures which, although not of sufficient quality to meet national listing criteria, have valuable architectural or historic merit and make a positive contribution to local character. Development proposals affecting such sites or buildings will be sympathetic to their character and will respect their key architectural or historic features. Demolition of a locally listed building will require planning consent, as will works which adversely affect any of the features recognised on the Local List.

4.86 Accordingly:

- a. In East Dorset, a Local List of Heritage Assets will be produced.
- b. In Christchurch the existing Local List of Heritage Assets will be updated.

4.87 Issue 3 How can we further prevent harmful changes to conservation areas and listed buildings?

Option HE2 Development within Conservation Areas (this option is set out in the Core Strategy under Creating High Quality and Distinctive Environments)

4.88 To consider the use of Article 4(2) Directions (that do not require Secretary of State approval) to control small scale works to buildings in conservation areas and within the curtilage of listed buildings that would otherwise be authorised by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

Option HE 3 To implement Article 4(1) Directions (which require Secretary of State approval) to control larger scale works in conservation areas (this option is set out in the Core Strategy under Creating High Quality and Distinctive Environments)

4.89 To consider the use of Article 4(1) Directions in appropriate cases (where the consent of the Secretary of State is required) to control small scale works to buildings in conservation areas and within the curtilage of listed buildings that would otherwise be authorised by the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development)Order 1995.

5 Implementation

5.1 This section sets out a detailed implementation plan with reference to the key stakeholders involved in the delivery / implementation of the strategy and timescales involved.

5.2 In summary there are no infrastructure requirements for the implementation of the historic built environment strategy. Resource implications have been considered and factored into the delivery timetable.

5.3 Delivery Timetable for Historic Built Environment Strategy

Policy Proposal	Infrastructure Requirements	Partners	Constraints	Delivery/Timescale
Protect, conserve and enhance important Heritage Assets through careful control of development that may affect these features.	None	English Heritage	None	Ongoing
Appraisals of existing Conservation Areas and possible designation of new ones,	None		LA resources	Short to Medium Term
In East Dorset, a Local List of Heritage Assets will be produced, and in Christchurch the existing Local List of Heritage Assets will be updated.	None		LA resources	Short to Medium Term
To control inappropriate, small scale works to buildings in Conservation Areas, and within the curtilage of Listed Buildings. (Article 4 Directions)	None		LA resources	Short to Medium Term

Table 5.1